

Department's efforts to reauthorize our Nation's aviation programs. Our Nation is outgrowing our aviation capacity. More people are flying every year, and so we must modernize our airports and our air traffic control.

We also face the challenges of reducing congestion in our surface and maritime transportation systems. To accomplish these tasks, America needs creative thinking and innovative solutions, and I believe Mary Peters will provide them.

As Mary works to build a better transportation system, she will be a careful steward of the people's money. She brings to her new position a reputation for fiscal discipline and integrity. As head of the Federal Highway Administration, Mary introduced better fiscal oversight and accountability. She improved management for the largest transportation projects. She worked closely with her department's inspector general to eliminate waste, fraud, and abuse. She's going to carry this kind of diligence into her new job.

She understands the importance of a modern infrastructure and good management. And I'm pleased she has agreed to serve her country once again. As she takes on this important position, she has my full trust and my confidence. Mary, I look forward to working with you as the new Secretary of Transportation. Congratulations.

It's now my honor to witness the swearing-in of Mary Peters.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:16 p.m. at the Department of Transportation. In his remarks, he referred to Terryl "Terry" Peters, Sr., husband of Secretary of Transportation Peters; and former Secretary of Transportation James H. Burnley IV. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Peters.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Ivo Sanader of Croatia

October 17, 2006

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of Croatia here. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

Prime Minister Sanader. Thank you very much.

President Bush. We just had a very lengthy and interesting discussion, which is what you would expect friends to do. I consider the Prime Minister a friend; I consider Croatia a friend as well.

We talked about foreign policy issues, issues of peace. I thank the people of Croatia for their support in Afghanistan of the young democracy. I also believe it's in the world's interest that Croatia join NATO as well as the European Union. And to that end, when I go to Riga, I will make the case that Croatia should be admitted. It seems like a reasonable date would be 2008.

We talked about bilateral relations. We talked about investments, investment opportunities in Croatia. We talked about the need to enhance trade and commerce. The Prime Minister has invited me to come. I've heard unbelievably great things about your country, Mr. Prime Minister. I hear it's one of the most beautiful places on the face of the Earth. I'd love to come sometime. I've got to clear it first with my wife. [Laughter]

But nevertheless, all in all, it's been a very good meeting. And I welcome you here, and thank you for coming.

Prime Minister Sanader. Thank you, Mr. President. I've been touched by the warmth of this reception during this visit and of the interest and understanding you have shown in Croatia and the challenges facing Europe today.

About the only question we disagreed was whether Croatia or the United States had the most beautiful coastline.

President Bush. That's right. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Sanader. I will let you and Mrs. Bush judge for yourselves when you visit Croatia, where you certainly will be most welcome, Mr. President.

The President and I, we discussed a range of issues of bilateral concerns, especially of the preparations of my country to join EU and NATO. And I expressed my gratitude to the President for his constant support for Croatia on its way.

I also—we discussed a range of issues of—regarding our region of southeastern Europe: final status of Kosovo; Georgia; Ukraine; Moldova. We are very active. Croatia is not forgetting that we are in the region

where we still need a strong U.S. and European cooperation. We believe strongly in transatlantic partnership. There is no alternative to this. I think that President Bush and the United States of America, along with the EU, have still to be very, very closely cooperating in a couple of issues in Europe.

So thank you very much, Mr. President, for warm reception and very fruitful discussion.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. I appreciate it. Good job. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Signing the Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act

October 17, 2006

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 233, the “Northern California Coastal Wild Heritage Wilderness Act.” The Act strengthens protection of certain lands in California.

Section 4(i)(2) of the Act purports to give binding legal effect to guidelines in an appendix to a report issued by a congressional committee, which was not incorporated into the Act and for which presentment was not made. Consistent with the bicameral approval and presentment requirements of the Constitution for the making of a law, the executive branch shall, in carrying out the Act, take appropriate account of the guidelines as a matter of comity between the executive and legislative branches.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 17, 2006.

NOTE: H.R. 233, approved October 17, was assigned Public Law No. 109–362.

Statement on Signing the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007

October 17, 2006

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 5122, the “John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007” (the “Act”). The Act authorizes funding for the defense of the United States and its interests abroad, for military construction, for national security-related energy programs, and for maritime security-related transportation programs.

Several provisions of the Act call for executive branch officials to submit to the Congress recommendations for legislation, or purport to regulate the manner in which the President formulates recommendations to the Congress for legislation. These provisions include sections 516(h), 575(g), 603(b), 705(d), 719(b), 721(e), 741(e), 813, 1008, 1016(d), 1035(b)(3), 1047(b), and 1102 of the Act, section 118(b)(4) of title 10, United States Code, as amended by section 1031 of the Act, section 2773b of title 10 as amended by section 1053 of the Act, and section 403 of the Ronald W. Reagan National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2005 (Public Law 108–375) as amended by section 403 of the Act. The executive branch shall construe these provisions in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President deems necessary and expedient.

The executive branch shall construe sections 914 and 1512 of the Act, which purport to make consultation with specified Members of Congress a precondition to the execution of the law, as calling for but not mandating such consultation, as is consistent with the Constitution’s provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws.

A number of provisions in the Act call for the executive branch to furnish information to the Congress or other entities on various subjects. These provisions include sections 219, 313, 360, 1211, 1212, 1213, 1227, 1402, and 3116 of the Act, section 427 of title 10,